

XXIII.—*Additional Notes on the Ornithology of Transvaal.*

By THOMAS AYRES. Communicated by JOHN HENRY GURNEY.

[Continued from 'The Ibis' for 1878, p. 411.]

[As in previous papers, I have numbered the species not included in Mr. Ayres's former Transvaal lists consecutively with those recorded in his preceding notes.—J. H. G.]

The greater part of the birds mentioned in the following notes were collected by me in the Magaliesbergen. The mountains so called consist of many ranges, interspersed with broad flat valleys miles in extent and width, in one of which is situated the village of Rustenburg.

308. *AQUILA VERREAUXI*, Less. Verreaux's Eagle.

I found these Eagles amongst the most inaccessible precipices of the Magaliesbergen; here and there a pair had possession of a precipitous range and were breeding. I saw the nest on two occasions, and on one, by getting to a height above, I could see the old bird on the nest; but I did not succeed in bagging a specimen. Once I was perched on the top of a crag at the edge of a sheer precipice of three or four hundred feet, when one of these Eagles passed over me from behind, and I gave it such a dressing that it half fell, half flew, about a quarter of a mile down the ravine, and at last fell on the ground with a thump. I descended as quickly as possible, making sure that I should get the bird; but when I came up to within about a hundred yards of where it had fallen, it recovered and flew slowly round the bend of the precipice, and I lost sight of it altogether.

[Although Mr. Ayres did not succeed in obtaining a specimen of this Eagle, there is no doubt that he correctly identified it, as in its adult plumage it could not be mistaken by so accurate an observer, differing, as it does, most conspicuously from every other species of the genus *Aquila*.—J. H. G.]

309. *ASTURINULA MONOGRAMMICA* (Temm.). One-streaked Hawk.

Male, Rustenburg, August 12, 1878. Irides lake-red; bill dusky brown, basal part and cere light scarlet; tarsi and feet

red-orange. Total length $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches, bill from gape 1, tarsus $2\frac{1}{4}$, tail $5\frac{1}{2}$, wing 9.

Female, Rustenburg, January 24, 1878. Bill black, base red; legs red*.

One of these Hawks was shot by my brother during the summer; and the other I shot in the early spring. They are the first of the kind I have met with, and certainly never appear, so far as I know, in the Potchefstroom district. Above Rustenburg they appear to be not uncommon during our summer months; but as winter approaches they disappear; I saw but two in the spring, solitary birds, and exceedingly shy.

[I believe the species has never before been noticed in so southern a locality on the eastern side of the African continent; on the western side a specimen from the vicinity of the Okavango river is recorded in my edition of the late Mr. Andersson's 'Notes on the Birds of Damara Land,' p. 26.

The male bird sent is in full adult plumage; the female, which was just commencing her moult, has all the grey portions of her older suit of feathers perceptibly tinged with brown, which I take to be an indication of immature plumage.

I have frequently observed in birds of prey killed when the period of moulting had approached, that the pale-coloured portions of the rectrices have become much more worn than the dark portions; such is remarkably the case in the present specimen as regards the central pair of rectrices, in which the white transverse bar is greatly worn, and much more so than the adjacent dark portions of the feather.

In 'The Ibis' for 1876, p. 484, I referred to the near affinity which exists between this species and the genus *Melierax*, which has been subsequently confirmed by an observation of the late Mr. E. C. Buxton†, that this bird has a song (which he heard uttered by it on the coast opposite

* [Mr. Ayres does not give the measurements of this specimen from the flesh; but I have taken the following from the skin :—wing 9·8 inches, tarsus 2·4.—J. H. G.]

† *Vide* P. Z. S. 1878, p. 791.

Zanzibar) evidently analogous to the musical notes of *Melierax canorus* and of *M. gabar*.—J. H. G.]

MELIERAX CANORUS (Rislach). Chanting Hawk.

Adult, Rustenburg, June 10th.

In the more northern and wooded parts of the Rustenburg district this bird is common, and exceedingly tame in some instances.

MELIERAX GABAR (Daud.). Gabar Hawk.

Male adult, Rustenburg, August 8th. Iris brownish lake-red.

Female adult, Rustenburg, July 31st. Iris lake-red.

Not by any means plentiful about Rustenburg. One of these birds attempted to carry off a Golden-breasted Bunting that I had killed, but failed in the attempt.

310. ACCIPITER MINULLUS (Daud.). Least African Sparrow-Hawk.

Female immature, Rustenburg, July 1st. Irides pale gamboge-yellow; cere and eyelids pale greenish yellow; bill black horn-colour; tarsi and feet dingy pale yellow.

The specimen sent is the only one which I saw during a three months' stay in the Rustenburg district; I found it on a thickly wooded hill-side.

TINNUNCULUS CENCHRIS (Naum.). Grey-winged Kestrel.

Male adult, Potchefstroom, February 8th.

Female adult, near Potchefstroom, May 2.

BUBO MACULOSUS (Vieill.). Spotted Eagle-Owl.

Male, Rustenburg, July 20th. Irides bright yellow.

This is a very scarce Owl about Rustenburg, the specimen sent being the only which I saw whilst there.

GLAUCIDIUM PERLATUM (Vieill.). African Pearl-spotted Owlet.

Male, Rustenburg, July 9th.

Male, Rustenburg, July 26th.

Female, Rustenburg, July 9th.

In all the above the irides were bright gamboge-yellow, the bill pale greenish yellow, and the feet pale dingy yellow.

These pretty little Owls are by no means uncommon in the Rustenburg district ; but they are not easily seen ; and on a too near approach to the tree on which they are they fly off very silently, and with the exact flight of a Thrush. Unless you know the Owl you at once mistake it for a Thrush ; I lost several in that way. Those I came across were solitary birds.

The Drongo Shrikes imitate the loud notes of these Owls very neatly, and have led me many a dance over rough ground through the bush in pursuit, as I thought, of the Owl ; but at last I found, to my disgust, that it was only the Drongo amusing himself.

[As Mr. Sharpe, at p. 211 of the second volume of his 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum,' remarks in reference to this species, "Nothing is as yet precisely known regarding the young plumage of this Owl," I may mention that the Norwich Museum possesses two fledged nestlings, procured in the Transvaal by Mr. Ayres some years since, and both marked by him as males. These young birds differ from the adults in the entire absence of white spots from the upper surface of the head and neck, from the interscapular feathers, and from the lesser and median wing-coverts ; they show the white nuchal collar, but not the rufescent collar which in adult birds adjoins the white, to which it forms a kind of posterior edging ; in other respects the plumage of these nestlings resembles that of the adult.]

311. *CAPRIMULGUS LENTIGINOSUS*, Smith. Freckled Goatsucker.

Male, Rustenburg, May 27th. Irides umber ; bill dusky ; tarsi and feet dusky brown.

Male, Rustenburg. July 13th.

Female, Rustenburg, May 30th. Irides dark umber ; bill dusky brown ; tarsi and feet dingy brown. Stomach contained beetles.

Female. Rustenburg, June 13th.

This is the only kind of Goatsucker which I met with about Rustenburg ; they frequent the edges of bushy hill-sides, getting well under shelter during the day, and coming out to

feed in the open in the evening; they are generally solitary, and I never found more than two together.

[The two male specimens of this scarce Goatsucker sent by Mr. Ayres respectively measure in the wing 7·95 and 7·9 inches, and the two females 7·9 and 7·6. Both the males are somewhat darker than the females on the entire upper surface, and much darker than Sir A. Smith's figure* of a female obtained by him in Great Namaqua Land; they are also somewhat darker than the specimen preserved in the British Museum, which was obtained at the river Cunéné, and which, judging from the absence of any white patch on the tail, is also a female. One of the males sent by Mr. Ayres shows a large subterminal patch of pure white on both webs of the two outermost pairs of rectrices; this white patch reaches to the edge of the feather at the tip of the inner web on the pair of rectrices next to the outermost pair; and on the latter it does so very nearly; in the other male all these feathers have been cut off (apparently by a shot), except one of the external rectrices, in which the white patch is even more extended than in the first-named specimen, being fully an inch and a half in length. No trace of any white patch is to be found on the tail of either of the female birds.

In both the males, and in the larger of the two females, there is a white spot on the inner web of the first four primaries; in the other female it is present in the first three only†.—J. H. G.]

MEROPS BULLOCKOIDES, Smith. White-fronted Bee-eater.

Male and female, Rustenburg, June 11th. Irides dusky; bill black; tarsi and feet dusky.

These Bee-eaters are exceedingly common about Rustenburg; towards evening they go in flights, appearing to congregate and roost at certain known localities, generally on the sides of a gully with perpendicular banks, on the ledges of which they sleep; in such situations they also breed during the summer months, as is evident from the many holes

* *Vide* 'Illustrations of South-African Zoology,' Aves, pl. 101.

† I have recorded a similar instance of variation in this particular in *C. rufigena* in 'The Ibis' for 1877, p. 341.

bored in the banks ; during the day they generally disperse, and may then be found solitary, or but two or three together.

[Livingstone mentions seeing this species, and also *Merops apiaster*, breeding in society in holes in the banks of the river Leeambye in November or December (*vide* 'Missionary Travels,' p. 248); see also Mr. Buckley's account of the nidification of this Bee-eater on the banks of the Limpopo in 'The Ibis' for 1874, p. 363.—J. H. G.]

MEROPS PUSILLUS, Müll. Rufous-winged Bee-eater.

Male and female, Rustenburg, June 17th and July 22nd. Irides bright crimson ; bill black ; tarsi and feet dusky.

A common species about Rustenburg, frequenting sparsely wooded localities, and pretty generally distributed.

312. CORACIAS CAUDATUS, Linn. Lilac-breasted Roller.

Male, Rustenburg, July 30th. Irides light umber ; bill black ; tarsi and feet pale olive-green.

Female, Rustenburg, July 27th. Irides tawny ; bill, tarsi, and feet as in the male. Stomach contained beetles and grasshoppers.

I found these Rollers scarce and very wild ; they were solitary, or, at most, in pairs ; they frequent the wooded parts of the Megaliesbergen, apparently preferring some hill-sides to others, and high trees to the lower bush.

[In the pair of these birds sent by Mr. Ayres the exterior rectrices are about half an inch longer in the male than in the female. The late Mr. E. C. Buxton, who met with this species near the Lo Bombo mountains in August 1872, wrote to me respecting it as follows:—"The easiest way to get these birds was to set the grass on fire ; as soon as there was a large fire (and sometimes many acres would be burning at once), these birds came in numbers to feed on the insects that were driven out ; and, in fact, all the insectivorous birds came, to say nothing of Crows and other birds."—J. H. G.]

313. CORACIAS NÆVIUS, Licht. White-naped Roller.

Male, Rustenburg, June 24th. Irides ashy brown ; bill black ; tarsi and feet dull greenish yellow.

This Roller is much scarcer than the preceding species ; it

is much more easily approached, especially at the first attempt ; but it requires a hard rap to bring it down. I always found it solitary. I was told that the Rollers become more plentiful towards our summer months.

HIRUNDO DIMIDIATA, Sund. Pearly-breasted Swallow.

Sex uncertain, Rustenburg, May 29th.

Female, Rustenburg, July 29th.

In both the above, irides dusky ; bill, tarsi, and feet black.

During our winter these birds are common about Rustenburg ; they seem for the most part to keep in pairs, and one may often see two of them sitting side by side on the dead twig of some tree. They are most unsatisfactory birds to skin ; for they are generally so fearfully fat and oily that manipulation causes the oil to run all over the feathers, and the skin turns out a greasy mass which one tears to pieces in disgust.

COTYLE FULIGULA (Licht.). Brown Martin.

Male, Rustenburg, August 7th. Irides dusky ; bill nearly black ; tarsi and feet dusky.

This species is also tolerably common in the Rustenburg district, much more so than at Potchefstroom.

ALCEDO SEMITORQUATA, Swains. Half-collared Kingfisher.

Male, Rustenburg, July 4th. Irides dusky umber ; bill black ; tarsi and feet light red.

According to my experience this Kingfisher is decidedly a scarce species throughout the Transvaal ; the specimen sent is the only one that I saw during three months in the Rustenburg district.

CORYTHORNIS CRISTATA (Linn.). Malachite-crested Kingfisher.

This species is much scarcer in the Rustenburg district than it is about Potchefstroom.

CERYLE MAXIMA (Pall.). Great African Kingfisher.

Female, Rustenburg, July 4th. Irides dusky umber ; bill black ; tarsi and feet dusky.

This is a very scarce bird in the Rustenburg district ; the specimen sent is the only one that I saw there.

HALCYON ALBIVENTRIS (Scop.). Brown-hooded Kingfisher.

This is a common species in the Rustenburg district, where its loud note often attracts the attention of the hunter; it is mostly solitary. Two of the specimens sent contained locusts in the stomach; they were both shot on the 12th of June.

[Mr. Sharpe, in his monograph of the Kingfishers, and also in his edition of Layard, alludes to the differences in plumage which exists between specimens of this Kingfisher. The following are particulars of the five specimens sent to me by Mr. Ayres, by whom the notes of the colour of the bill and soft parts were made from the birds in the flesh. They were all obtained at or near Rustenburg.

No. 1, ♂, June 12th. Wing 4·3 inches, bill from forehead 1·7. Bill blood-red, but dusky towards the tip, ridge, and gonyes; tarsi and feet dull blood-red, but rather dusky on the upper surface. This specimen agrees with Mr. Sharpe's description*, except that the lesser and median coverts are narrowly edged with brown, and that a decided tinge of green is perceptible on all the blue portions of the plumage.

No. 2, ♂, July 19th. Wing 4·4 inches, bill 1·8. Irides dark umber; bill dull red; tarsi and feet dusky brick-red.

The plumage of this specimen closely resembles that of No. 1, except that the blue is not tinged with green, and the upper surface of the head is decidedly darker.

No. 3, ♂, July 22nd. Wing 4·4 inches, bill 1·8. Irides as No. 2; bill dull rose-red; tarsi and feet red, with the upper surface dusky.

This resembles No. 2, except as regards the head, which is as in No. 1; the pectoral striae are also less strongly marked than in Nos. 1 and 2.

No. 4, ♂, July 27th. Wing 4·3 inches, bill 1·6. Irides, bill, tarsi, and feet as in No. 2.

In this specimen the blue on the wings (but not elsewhere) is much duller than in the preceding examples, and is deci-

* Mr. Sharpe's figure of this species in his Monograph represents it with a pure white eyebrow, which is probably a mistake of the colorist, as, according to his description, and also in the specimens sent by Mr. Ayres, this portion of the plumage is "pale yellowish brown."

dedly tinged with green; the entire mantle, instead of being black, as in Nos. 1, 2, and 3, is dark brown, the wing-coverts being slightly edged with a paler brown; on the under surface the feathers of the throat have decided dark shaft-marks (which are quite absent in Nos. 2 and 3, and barely perceptible in No. 1); the pectoral striæ are broader, and the flanks and crissum more strongly tinged with fulvous than in the preceding specimens. I imagine that this individual is still in immature dress.

No. 5, ♀, June 12th. Wing 4·3 inches, bill 1·8. Bill dull blood-red, dusky towards the tip; tarsi and feet as in No. 1.

This specimen resembles No. 4, except that the greenish blue of the wing is a little brighter, and that the under surface is less striated and less fulvous, resembling the same portion of the plumage in No. 2.

These details seem to point to the inference that in the fully adult males the mantle is black, while in younger males and in females it is dark brown.—J. H. G.]

HALCYON CHELICUTI (Stanley). Striped Kingfisher.

No. 1, ♂, June 3rd. Irides dark umber; bill dusky, but with the gape and basal part of the lower mandible red; tarsi and feet dusky on the upper surfaces and reddish on the under.

No. 2, ♂, July 23rd. Irides dusky umber; bill dusky (nearly black), but with the basal part of the lower mandible pale crimson; tarsi and feet brick-red, with the upper surfaces brown. Stomach contained a mouse and several grasshoppers.

No. 3, ♂, July 23rd. Irides &c. as in No. 2.

No. 4, ♂, July 27th. Irides &c. as Nos. 1, 2, and 3, but with the brown part of the bill tinged with red.

No. 5, ♀, June 3rd. Irides &c. as in No. 1.

No. 6, ♀, July 27th. Irides dusky; bill light reddish brown, with the basal part of the under mandible crimson; tarsi and feet as in No. 1.

All the above-mentioned specimens were procured in the Rustenburg district, where this pretty species is as common

as the preceding one, and with much the same habits, though, being smaller, it is scarcely so conspicuous.

[I find that in the six specimens sent by Mr. Ayres, the length of the bill from the forehead is about 1·2 inch, with hardly any perceptible variation; in one male the wing-measurement is 3·3 inches, in one female 3·4, in two males and one female 3·45, and in the remaining male 3·5.—J. H. G.]

314. *CINNYRIS AFRA* (Linn.). Greater Double-collared Sun-bird.

This Sun-bird is common in the Rustenburg district, feeding about the flowers of the plantains in gardens, and about the dark rose-red blossoms of a parasitic plant which is very plentiful on many of the bush trees and shrubs.

315. *CINNYRIS TALATALA*, Smith. Andersson's Sun-bird.

Male, Rustenburg, August 9th. Irides umber-brown; bill, tarsi, and feet black.

This species is common in the same localities as the preceding one.

316. *CINNYRIS AMETHYSTINA* (Shaw). Amethyst Sun-bird.

Male, Rustenburg, August 3rd. Irides, bill, tarsi, and feet black.

This Sun-bird is very plentiful in some localities, notably about "Oliphants Nek," a pass in the Magaliesbergen, about twelve miles from Rustenburg, where there is a good deal of bush and much parasite plant.

317. *UPUPA AFRICANA*, Licht. South-African Hoopoe.

This species is not by any means uncommon; it is found solitary or in pairs, frequenting wooded localities.

318. *IRRISOR ERYTHORHYNCHUS* (Lath.). Red-billed Wood-Hoopoe.

Male adult, Rustenburg, June 7th. Irides dark umber; bill, tarsi, and feet bright crimson.

Male, young, Rustenburg, June 7th. Bill black; tarsi and feet pale red.

The loud note of these birds is frequently heard amongst the trees; but it is not always easy to get within shot of them,

as they appear to know the sight of a gun. They generally occur in small companies.

[The young male bird sent by Mr. Ayres is in nestling-plumage, and entirely of a dull black, except the wings and tail, which are iridescent, as in the adult, but less tinged with purple; the tail is imperfect, but seems to have been shorter than in the adult; the bill not only differs in colour from that of the adult, but is very much shorter, the culmen, which measures 2·2 inches in the adult male sent by Mr. Ayres, being only 1·15 in the young one.—J. H. G.]

BUCEROS NASUTUS, Linn. African Grey Hornbill.

Female adult, June 10th. Irides reddish brown*; bill dusky red at the tip, the base of the upper mandible dingy white, but dusky brown round the nostrils, the base of the lower mandible black, with narrow transverse white stripes; the bare skin at the base of the lower mandible pale green; tarsi and feet dusky. Insects in the stomach.

This Hornbill is certainly not common about Rustenburg during our winter months. When found it is almost always in pairs; but a solitary bird is seen occasionally.

BUCEROS FLAVIROSTRIS, Rüpp. Yellow-billed Hornbill.

This species, like the preceding one, is found solitary or in pairs; it is sparsely distributed about the wooded hill-sides of the Magaliesbergen.

TRACHYPHONUS CAFER (Vieill.). Le Vaillant's Barbet.

Male and female. Irides lake-red; bill greenish yellow, dusky at the tip; tarsi and feet dusky ash-colour.

This curious Barbet is common enough; but as it is generally of quiet habits, slinking about dense bushes, it is not often noticed. Its note is peculiar, I can only compare it to the alarum of a clock going off at full speed, and then repeated constantly at intervals of a second or two, just time enough, I suppose, for the bird to get breath to run the alarum off again; sometimes they utter this call from the centre of a dense bush; at others they select a conspicuous

* In another adult female, killed July 26th, the irides were hazel, and the bare skin adjoining the lower mandible pale dingy green.

dead bough, on the top of which they perch, with the bill pointed well upwards. This peculiar call of theirs can be heard at a considerable distance. They feed upon berries and fruits. My brother obtained three young birds of this species, which became very tame, and followed him all about the house, constantly letting off their alarm-note, and invariably doing so when pleased; they all unfortunately met with their deaths by accidents.

POGONORHYNCHUS LEUCOMELAS (Bodd.). Pied Barbet.

Wherever bushy ranges are found this species is not uncommon.

319. POGONORHYNCHUS TORQUATUS (Dum.). Black-cheeked Barbet.

Male and female. Irides dull red; tarsi and feet dusky, in some specimens dingy black.

These Barbets are very common; sometimes four or five of them may be seen together on the same bough, bowing and scraping to each other in a most comical manner, and singing out most lustily *ko-korro, ko-korro*, rapidly repeated.

320. BARBATULA EXTONI, Layard. Exton's Barbet.

Male, Rustenburg, June 27th. Irides dusky umber; bill black; tarsi and feet dusky brown. Stomach contained berries of a mistletoe.

This Barbet is not at all uncommon in the Magaliesbergen, but, being an inconspicuous little bird, is easily overlooked; those I saw were almost always on or near a species of mistletoe, which, during our winter months, is well covered with berries, upon which these birds feed. Having nipped off a berry, the bird, with its head well up, cleverly divides it and discards the fruity shell, when the kernel seems to slip down its throat unawares, and the bird has a comical look, as if astonished at the result. Those I saw were solitary. The note is peculiarly loud for so small a bird.

321. INDICATOR SPARRMANI, Steph. Sparrman's Honey-Guide.

Male, Rustenburg, June 1st. Irides hazel; bill very pale

pink ; tarsi and feet dusky brown. Stomach full of bees, wax, and comb.

Female, Rustenburg, July. Irides light dusky brown ; bill dusky horn-colour ; tarsi and feet dusky.

I only saw three birds of this species whilst at Rustenburg, all solitary, and sitting silently on trees.

[As pointed out in Sharpe's edition of Layard, p. 167, the the female of this species "wants the black throat of the male," from which it also differs in the yellow shoulder-patch, the brown stripes on the flanks, the pale edgings to the wing-coverts, and the whitish ear-coverts being all much less conspicuous, and in the bill being of a different colour, as noted above, and somewhat shorter, the latter peculiarity resembling that which is observable in the females of many of the Larks.

These differences of colouring, which I have noted from the female bird sent by Mr. Ayres, agree pretty well with the observations of Heuglin on the same subject, quoted in Sharpe's paper on the Indicatoridæ in Rowley's 'Ornithological Miscellany,' vol. i. p. 202.—J. H. G.]

322. INDICATOR MAJOR, Steph. White-rumped Honey-Guide.

The specimen sent was a solitary one, and the bird is by no means plentiful about Rustenburg. The farmers much dislike having any of the Honey-Guides shot, as their lads frequently follow the birds to a bees' nest.

CHRYSOCCYX CUPREUS (Bodd.). Didric Cuckoo.

Male, Potchefstroom, February 14th. Irides dull red, eyelids dusky, almost black ; bill dusky, but the under mandible palish ; tarsi and feet dusky.

This bird flew out from amongst the grapevines in my garden, and settled in a thick fig-tree hedge, where I shot it nearly to bits, being very close. The bird had either a grape or an egg in its bill when I fired ; but though I looked carefully about I could not find either. In the *stomach* was an egg partly digested, which I take to be that of *Passer arcuatus* ; but I was not aware that the Cuckoos eat the eggs from the birds' nests they are accustomed to lay in.

When I picked up this specimen I thought it was a young one; but on examining the ovary and ducts I came to the conclusion that it was an old hen moulting.

I think I have stated before that these Cuckoos do not remain here during our winter months, June, July, and August.

[On comparing an adult male shot by Mr. Ayres on 2nd of December with an adult female which he obtained on 9th February, the only differences which I observe between them are the following: viz., the male has on the head a small white wedge-shaped patch, with its apex reaching to the base of the bill, and extending backwards to the centre of the crown; this is absent in the female; the white portions of the median wing-coverts extend only to the outer web of the feather in the male, but to both webs in the female; the breast, which is an almost pure white in the male, is decidedly tinged with fulvous in the female; the eyelids are noted by Mr. Ayres as "crimson" in the male specimen, and as "dusky" in the female.

The female bird recorded above as shot by Mr. Ayres on the 14th of February, has a more coppery tinge on the upper surface than the female just referred to as killed on the 9th of February, which I attribute to its being a somewhat younger bird, this coppery hue being conspicuous in still younger specimens, which retain a portion of the partially rufous immature dress (*conf.* Ibis, 1878, pp. 407, 408).—J. H. G.]

323. COCCYSTES GLANDARIUS (Linn.). Great Spotted Cuckoo.

Male adult. This was a solitary bird, shot 18th of January, amongst low mimosa bush, about fifteen miles from Potchefstroom; this species is very scarce indeed in these parts.

DENDROPICUS FULVISCAPUS, Ill. Cardinal Woodpecker.

No. 1, ♂, Rustenburg, July 8th. Irides brownish lake-red; bill dusky horn-colour, under mandible ashy; tarsi and feet pale greenish ash.

No. 2, ♀, Rustenburg, July 9th. Irides dark lake-red; bill dusky ash-colour; tarsi and feet as in No. 1.

No. 3, ♀, Rustenburg, July 19. Irides lake-red; bill dark dusky ash-colour; tarsi and feet olive-green.

No. 4, ♀, Rustenburg, July 26th. Irides lake-red; bill dusky towards the tip; tarsi and feet ashy olive.

This is the commonest of the Woodpeckers about Rustenburg.

[In Sharpe's edition of Layard's 'Birds of South Africa,' p. 190, this species is given under Gmelin's specific name of *cardinalis*. This title was founded on Sonnerat's description of a Woodpecker, of which that traveller remarks, "Je décrirai trois Pies que j'ai observés à l'isle de Luçon; le premier est de la taille du Pic vert . . . On pourroit nommer cette première espèce le Pic Cardinal de l'isle de Luçon"*. I think, although the description given by Sonnerat suits the present species as regards colouring, the difference of size and of locality makes its title to be the bird described by Sonnerat too doubtful to be admitted; and I have therefore used for it the specific name of "*fulviscapus*," which I consider to be the oldest synonym undoubtedly referable to this species.

On reexamining a Woodpecker previously sent by Mr. Ayres, and recorded by me in 'The Ibis' for 1877, p. 342, under the name of *Dendropicus hartlaubi*, I am now of opinion that I ought to have referred it to this species, from which, I confess, I feel very doubtful whether *D. hartlaubi* is in reality specifically distinct. I observe that the late Professor Sundevall inclined to the same opinion, as, after recounting the slight differences which, in his opinion, distinguished *D. hartlaubi* from *D. fulviscapus*, he adds, "magnitudine omnibusque reliquis exacte cum præcedente convenit, nec aliter nisi varietas ejus localis haberi potest."—J. H. G.]

CAMPETHERA BENNETTI (Smith). Bennett's Woodpecker.

Not a common Woodpecker amongst the Magaliesbergen mountains, but somewhat more plentiful than the succeeding species.

[The specimen sent is in female plumage, though marked by Mr. Ayres as a male; perhaps it may be an immature

* 'Voyage à la Nouvelle Guinée,' par M. Sonnerat, p. 72.

male in female dress. It was shot near Rustenburg on 22nd July; the bill was noted by Mr. Ayres as "dark dusky ash," and the tarsi and feet as "ash-colour." I may add that the reference given under the head of this species in Sharpe's edition of Layard's 'Birds of South Africa' (p. 182), to Malherbe's monograph, vol. ii. *pl.* 165, is a misprint for *page* 165; Malherbe figures this Woodpecker, *pl.* 95. figs. 1 & 2, and calls it in his letterpress "Le Chrysopie de Bennett ou d'Abington."—J. H. G.]

DENDROPICUS NAMAQUUS (Licht.). Bearded Woodpecker.

Male and female. Irides bright garnet-colour; bill dusky, with the under mandible lighter; tarsi and feet pale dingy olive-green.

A scarce species amongst these mountains, and withal hard to get; they seem to prefer the mimosa trees whereon to search for food.

324. *JYNX PECTORALIS*, Vig. Southern Red-throated Wryneck.

Male and female, evidently a pair, shot 6th and 8th of July, at Rustenburg, where this species is very scarce. I do not remember to have seen it previously in the Transvaal.

[To be continued.]

XXIV.—On *Melaniparus semilarvatus*.

By T. SALVADORI, C.M.Z.S.

(Plate IX.)

MR. HUME, in 'Stray Feathers,' vol. vii. p. 458, writes of my *Melaniparus semilarvatus* as follows:—"There is a wretched species, No. 649 ter of my list, viz. *Melaniparus semilarvatus* of Salvadori, of which I have for years tried to obtain a description. At last I wrote to Salvadori himself; but he, though very kindly favouring me with all his more recent publications, will not come to the front about this particular species. I conclude it is a bad species."

To this public appeal I must answer:—

1st. That I have no doubt, as Mr. Hume says so, that he